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# Labor Market News Letter, October 1949

Maine Employment Security Commission

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### Recommended Citation

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949/10

**LABOR MARKET****NEWS LETTER**

Maine Employment Security Commission 331 Water Street Augusta, Maine

**OCTOBER - 1949**

ISSUED BI-MONTHLY

**LABOR MARKET HIGHLIGHTS**

GENERAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS in Maine showed definite improvements during September and the early part of October. Over-all nonagricultural employment dropped off slightly between August and September, but this was due primarily to pay roll reductions in the various seasonal activities which normally experience curtailments at the end of the summer period. Most of the State's major nonseasonal industries either registered employment gains in September or gave evidence of having nearly reached the end of their planned retrenchments which had been necessary because of the adverse effects on their operations of the past year's economic recession.

The unemployment problem in Maine, although still present, was nevertheless alleviated to a marked degree, in the first few weeks of the fall period. Hirings in nonseasonal industries and the utilization of a large number of workers in the Aroostook County potato harvest did much to reduce unemployment. However, the withdrawal from the labor market of persons — mostly youths and women — who had been available only for summer employment also served to ease the unemployment situation.

**UNEMPLOYMENT DROPPED TO  
LOWEST POINT OF THE YEAR  
EARLY IN OCTOBER**

THERE WERE fewer unemployed persons in Maine during the first part of October than at any time since the first of this year. Seasonal factors have played an important part in bringing about recent declines in the number of unemployed, but indicative of improvements in the basic economy of the State is the fact that unemployment among workers normally attached to some of the most important manufacturing industries has been reduced during the last two or three months. The volume of unemployment in Maine is still running above last year, and, although the over-all economic picture has improved since the first of the summer, some communities are faced with greater public relief problems than they have encountered since before World War II.

**OVER 23,500 PERSONS ARE  
CURRENTLY REGISTERED  
FOR WORK**

OVER 23,500 persons are currently registered for work with the sixteen local offices of the Employment Security Commission. This represents a decline of approximately 20.6 per cent from the number of job-seekers registered two months ago, and an increase of 101 per cent over the number actively seeking employment through the facilities of this Commission a year ago. A little over a third — or 7,880 — of the present registrants are females, and nearly 29 per cent — or 6,780 — are veterans.

**EMPLOYERS ARE STILL OFFERED  
WIDE CHOICE IN FILLING  
THEIR LABOR NEEDS**

IN ORDER to assist employers in finding the best qualified workers available to fill their labor needs, and, at the same time, to aid job-seekers in locating employment opportunities for which they are suited, the local offices of the Employment Security Commission classify all applicants on the basis of their work histories, aptitudes, and training according to specific and closely defined occupations. At present, workers registered with the local offices are available in every occupation for which there might be demand, under normal circumstances, in this State. Current applicants are classified within general occupational categories as follows: professional and managerial — 1,092; clerical and sales — 2,563; service — 1,601; skilled — 4,326; semiskilled — 7,291; and unskilled — 6,680.

**TOTAL NONAGRICULTURAL  
EMPLOYMENT DROPPED  
SLIGHTLY IN SEPTEMBER**

TOTAL EMPLOYMENT in nonagricultural industries dropped slightly between August and September largely as a result of curtailments in various activities which are wholly or partially dependent upon the summer resort and tourist trade. Full- and part-time employment in nonfarm industries during pay periods ending nearest September 15 totalled 263,700 according to estimates prepared by the Maine Employment Security Commission in cooperation with the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. This figure was only 200 below the estimate relating to mid-August employment.

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## MAINE'S SURPLUS OF PRODUCTION WORKERS HAS BEEN REDUCED SINCE JULY

BECAUSE of hirings in certain manufacturing industries, labor force withdrawals, and the utilization of labor from all sections of the State in the Aroostook County potato harvest, there was a rather sharp drop between July and October in the surplus of production workers in the labor market. At the first of October there were nearly 6,100 fewer skilled, semiskilled, and unskilled job-seekers registered with this Agency than in the latter part of July. The greatest decline occurred in the unskilled group which showed a decrease of 3,370. The surplus of nonproduction workers has remained at about the same level — that is, at about 5,250 — for the last three months.

## MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES HAD A NET INCREASE OF 1,600

ALTHOUGH pay roll reductions were noted in some manufacturing industries between August and September, over-all manufacturing employment showed an increase of approximately 1,600. Nonmanufacturing industries, on the other hand, had a net decrease amounting to 1,800. This decline was not inconsistent with usual trends in September — last year nonmanufacturing employment dropped 2,000 between August and September. However, the increase in the number of workers engaged in manufacturing activities might be regarded as contra-seasonal. In 1948, manufacturing pay rolls showed a decrease of 1,100 at the end of the summer period.

## TEXTILE PRODUCTS AND APPAREL INDUSTRIES LED THE ADVANCE

CONDITIONS in the textile and apparel industries improved quite noticeably in September. Aggregate employment in the two fields climbed 900 between mid-August and September 15 to 27,700. Although this was 9.8 per cent under last year's level of 30,700, it was the highest point reached since February. The most significant gains in the past several weeks have been in establishments producing cotton or cotton and rayon fabrics, but it is likewise true that the outlook has become brighter in the garment industry.

## SARDINE CANNING ESTABLISHMENTS RESUMED FULL-SCALE OPERATIONS IN SEPTEMBER

THE SAGGING economy of a number of coastal communities was bolstered in September by the resumption of full-scale operations in most of the sardine canning plants of the State. For the greater part of the summer the output of these establishments was severely hampered by a lack of fish suitable for processing. However, the supply of fish increased at the end of the summer, making it possible for sardine canners to expand their pay rolls to peak levels for the year. This development resulted in a net employment gain of 700 in the food and kindred products industry, despite the fact that a number of vegetable processing plants ceased operations in the latter part of August and the first part of September.

## PAPER AND ALLIED PRODUCTS REGISTERED A GAIN OF 300 IN SEPTEMBER

ALTHOUGH employment in some paper mills dropped slightly in September, the paper and allied products industry as a whole registered a gain of 300 between August and September. This industry experienced gradual employment declines from the first of the year until midsummer, but since July there have been indications that over-all pay rolls in the industry might be following a slight upward trend. However, since paper manufacturing is perhaps the most stable manufacturing industry in Maine with respect to employment, minor month-to-month pay roll fluctuations are not always indicative of general employment trend developments.

## ESTIMATED AVERAGE EARNINGS AND HOURS OF WORK

ESTIMATES relating to the average weekly hours worked by production workers in manufacturing industries, and the average hourly and weekly earnings of these workers are presented in the following table. These estimates, pertaining to mid-month weekly pay periods in September 1949, August 1949, and September 1948 are based upon data furnished by selected manufacturing employers throughout the State.

Item	Mid-Month Weeks In:		
	September 1949	August 1949	September 1948
Average Weekly Hours Worked	39.3	39.7	40.4
Average Hourly Earnings	\$ 1.153	\$ 1.129	\$ 1.174
Average Weekly Earnings	\$45.36	\$44.85	\$47.38



**PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE**  
**OF NONAGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT IN MAINE**  
**September, 1949<sup>1</sup> (In thousands)**

Compiled by the Maine Employment Security Commission in cooperation with the  
United States Bureau of Labor Statistics

INDUSTRY	Sept. <sup>2</sup> 1949	Aug. <sup>2</sup> 1949	Sept. <sup>2</sup> 1948	Percentage Change	
				Aug. 1949 to Sept. 1949	Sept. 1948 to Sept. 1949
Total Nonagricultural Employment.....	263.7	263.9	277.7	-0.1	-5.0
Total Manufacturing.....	111.4	109.8	120.4	1.5	-7.5
Durable Goods.....	27.2	27.5	33.6	-1.1	-19.0
Lumber and Wood Products.....	17.7	17.9	20.0	-1.1	-11.5
Primary and Fabricated Metal Products and Machinery.....	6.0	6.2	9.7	-3.2	-38.1
All Other.....	3.5	3.4	3.9	2.9	-10.3
Nondurable Goods.....	84.2	82.3	86.8	2.3	-3.0
Food and Kindred Products.....	17.5	16.8	16.3	4.2	7.4
Textile-Mill Products and Apparel....	27.7	26.8	30.7	3.4	-9.8
Paper and Allied Products.....	17.3	17.0	19.2	1.8	-9.9
Leather Products.....	17.7	17.8	16.4	-0.6	7.9
All Other.....	4.0	3.9	4.2	2.6	-4.8
Total Nonmanufacturing.....	152.3	154.1	157.3	-1.2	-3.2
Mining and Quarrying.....	.6	.6	.7	0.0	-14.3
Contract Construction.....	10.1	10.2	13.3	-1.0	-24.1
Transportation and Other Public Utilities.....	19.4	19.7	20.3	-1.5	-4.4
Wholesale and Retail Trade.....	49.3	50.2	50.5	-1.8	-2.4
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate..	6.6	6.6	6.7	0.0	-1.5
Business, Personal and Misc. Services	26.3	27.7	25.6	-5.1	2.7
Government <sup>3</sup> .....	40.0	39.1	40.2	2.3	-0.5

<sup>1</sup> Data presented exclude domestics in private households, proprietors, self-employed, and unpaid family workers. Employment figures (except for government) relate to full- and part-time wage and salary workers in pay periods ending nearest the 15th of each month. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

<sup>2</sup> Estimates corrected to October 21, 1949.

<sup>3</sup> These estimates representing federal, state and local employment are prepared by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Federal employment is as of the first of the month and excludes fourth-class postmasters and substitute rural mail carriers. State and local government estimates represent persons on pay rolls during first-of-month pay periods, exclusive of those persons who receive only nominal amounts pay, such as for each meeting or fire attended.



## GENERAL EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK IS FAIRLY PROMISING

THE GENERAL employment outlook for the next few months is fairly promising in this State. Usual fall curtailments in a few industries — particularly in shoe manufacturing, fish processing, agriculture, and construction — will undoubtedly cause a rather sizable increase in unemployment by the end of the year. However, prospects in other industries which are not

ordinarily subject to seasonal cut-backs in the fall appear to be favorable. Employers in nearly all industrial fields — there are some exceptions — appear to be viewing the coming months with greater optimism than they have displayed in past periods, according to information furnished local office representatives contacting industrial establishments during the past month. In September contacts were made with over 800 different nonagricultural employers.

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## Maine Employment Security Commission

### EMPLOYMENT OFFICES

<i>Location</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Telephone</i>
Augusta	331 Water Street	1200-41
Bangor	182 Harlow Street	6435
Bath	174 Front Street	1748
Biddeford	275 Main Street	4-4571
Calais	87 Main Street	427
Caribou	Main Street	3331
Ellsworth	City Hall, Room 7	333
Houlton	32 Bangor Street	3606
Lewiston	19 Park Street	4-6971
Machias	Main Street	167
Portland	615 Congress Street	2-0186
Rockland	437 Main Street	105
Rumford	244 Waldo Street	805
Sanford	25 Washington Street	1045
Skowhegan	29 Water Street	368
Waterville	79 Temple Street	1886

After Five Days Return To  
MAINE  
EMPLOYMENT SECURITY COMMISSION  
AUGUSTA MAINE  
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

EMPLOYMENT SECURITY MAIL  
UNITED STATES POSTAGE  
ACCOUNTED FOR UNDER  
ACT OF CONGRESS  
(PAR. 13, SEC. 579, P. L. & R.)